been made to strengthen interaction with the public in the State. A State Level Advisory Council with twelve non-official prominent persons has been set-up. Efforts have also been made to associate prominent citizens in formal or informal arrangements in redressal of genuine grievances and for attending to development matters. Recently five prominent persons having political affiliations were released from detention.

The Government are keen to create favourable conditions for holding elections as soon as possible so that a representative Government can take office.

The Government is carefully watching the developments in Afghanistan and all appropriate measures will be taken to safeguard India's security and territorial integrity.

Death of publisher under police custody

1849. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the report about the printer and publisher of a Tamil weekly who died after his alleged torture in police custody recently causing great resentment among journalists of the country;

(b) whether Government have obtained any report from the Tamil Nadu Government, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTR OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a) to (c) Necessary information is being collected from the State Government of Tamil Nadu and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Repealing of Official Secrets Act

1856. DR. SANJAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Press Council of India has suggested the repeal of the Official Secrets Act; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Official Secrets Act, 1923, contains provisions for proceedings against persons indulging in espionage activities, wrongful communication etc. of information, unauthorised use of uniforms, falsification of report, forgery, personation, harbouring of spies etc. It would, therefore, not be in public interest to repeal this Act.

राज्यपालों के रिक्त पद

1851. **श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह :** क्या गृह मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) इस समय कौन-कौन से राज्यों और संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों में राज्यपाल के पद रिक्त हैं ; और

(ख) सरकार इन पदों को कब तक भरने का विचार रखती है ?

संसदीय कार्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री और गृह मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री श्री एम० एम० जैकब) : (क) और (ख) संविधान के अनुच्छेद 153 के अधीन उपबंधों के अनुसार